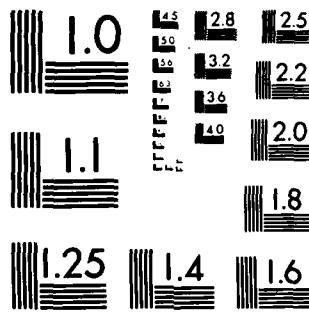


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## SPECTROSCOPIC MEASUREMENTS OF THE LASER-HANE PLASMA

### I. Introduction

One aspect of the laboratory simulation of HANE phenomena using a laser-target interaction is the measurement of the temperature and plasma densities in the photoionized region ahead of the blast-wave front and also at and behind the blast-wave front. Such measurements can then be used to check computer codes written to simulate such an event. Time-integrated and time-resolved spectroscopy is used here to make these measurements, and the results of the first experiment will be given. Spectroscopy has the advantage of being a passive measurement, requiring no physical probes or intense beams which may perturb the plasma during the measurement. Spectroscopy has the disadvantage of not giving complete spatial resolution, unless an Abel inversion procedure is performed, since it integrates along the optical path of the accepted rays. However, we do get some spatial resolution by making our observation at a known distance from the target surface. Data taken in higher pressure regimes, 1.5-5 Torr, will be emphasized in this paper.

### II. Description of Optical Arrangement

The physical layout of our experiment is shown in Fig. 1. The laser beam is incident onto the target from the left, having been focused by an f/6, 1.2-m lens to a focal spot between 250  $\mu\text{m}$  and 1000  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter. During the course of the experiment, both the laser energy and pulse duration were also varied to produce the desired ion velocities. The target is either a carbon or aluminum foil, typically 4-10  $\mu\text{m}$  thick, and the background gas present in the target chamber is nitrogen, hydrogen, or a mixture of 90%  $\text{N}_2$  and 10%  $\text{H}_2$  at pressures ranging from 15 mTorr to 5 Torr. (This corresponds to the range of pressures of HANE events of interest.)

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An optical train to observe the plasma luminosity is set up perpendicular to the laser beam and parallel to the target surface, with the axis of the optical train located 1 cm from the target. In some experiments an aperture is placed between the target surface and the line-of-sight so that the length of the photoionized region can be more accurately measured. (In the experiments described here, this aperture was not used, because observations of both the photoionized plasma and the debris plasma were made, and collisions of the debris with the aperture would have produced undesired spectral intensities.) Most of the measurements were made with the optical train shown in Fig. 1, which consists of a f/2.5, 9-cm f.l. lens, a plane mirror, and a concave mirror. The concave mirror has a 16-inch focal length. This optical train focuses the image of the plasma (magnified 4.25 times) onto the slit of a 1-m spectrograph-monochromator, equipped to take either photographic, time-integrated spectra or else time-resolved spectral data. A RCA-1P28 photomultiplier connected to a fast oscilloscope (Tektronix 7104) gives a system rise time of 3 nsec. The entire optical train including the spectrograph and the photomultipliers is calibrated in situ on an absolute scale using a calibrated tungsten lamp.

### III. Time-Integrated Spectra

Before any time-resolved spectral data were taken, a time-integrated survey was made of the spectra in the wavelength region from 3000 Å to 6500 Å. The spectra were recorded on Polaroid 57 film (ASA 3000) and a suitable exposure could usually be made using one shot of the laser. This data, even though time-integrated, shows which spectral lines are present in

the discharge and gives a rough indication of the relative intensity of the lines.

Figure 2 is a typical spectrum showing the region 3300 Å - 4200 Å. The conditions for this shot are as follows: a laser pulse (120 J, 4.5 nsec) is focused onto an aluminum foil target (4.5 microns thick) in a background of nitrogen gas at a pressure of 165 mTorr. The spectrograph views the plasma located 1 cm from the target surface. A wavelength calibration of the spectrum is made prior to the shot by superimposing the spectrum from a Hg vapor light source. The laser-plasma spectrum shows the molecular bands  $N_2$  3371.3 Å,  $N_2$  3576.9 Å,  $N_2^+$  3884.1 Å, and  $N_2^+$  3914.4 Å; and numerous nitrogen atomic ion lines including NII, NIII, and NIV lines. (Other spectral plates showed NI lines.) Also, the target spectral lines of AlI, AlII and AlIII are clearly seen. From these photographic spectra, one can choose suitable spectral lines for time-resolved observation using a monochromator with photoelectric recording. The data given in the remainder of the report will be taken with photomultiplier recording.

#### IV. Time-Resolved Spectral Data

One of the main reasons for taking time-resolved data is that it allows one to separate the photoionized region of the plasma from the plasma region which has been heated by the target debris. Also, photoelectric recording makes it much easier than photographic recording to make absolute intensity measurements of the spectral lines and the continuum.

In the results that are presented here we will be making measurements at three ambient gas pressures, which simulates three different atmospheric altitudes. The three pressures are 15 mTorr of nitrogen, 1.5 Torr of a 90%

nitrogen and 10% hydrogen mixture, and 5 Torr of the 90% N<sub>2</sub> and 10% H<sub>2</sub> mixture. (The N<sub>2</sub>,H<sub>2</sub> mixture was used because we had hoped to use the profile of one of the hydrogen Balmer lines as a measure of electron density. Due to the low intensity of this line, this technique proved to be impractical, so we used other spectroscopic techniques to determine N<sub>e</sub>.) It is felt that the small concentration (10%) of hydrogen is going to have little effect on the hydrodynamics or temperatures and densities of the target debris-plasma interaction.

#### V. Data Taken at Pressures below 1 Torr (N<sub>2</sub>,H<sub>2</sub>)

Three different spectral lines are time-correlated in Figure 3; the molecular ion line N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> 3914 Å, the singly-charged nitrogen ion line NII 3995 Å, and the carbon (hydrogen-like) ion CVI 3434 Å. These were obtained under conditions of 15 mTorr N<sub>2</sub> ( $4.9 \times 10^{14}$  molecules/cm<sup>3</sup> or  $9.8 \times 10^{14}$  atom/cm<sup>3</sup>) and a 1.5 mg/cm<sup>2</sup> carbon foil target; the bandwidth of the observed signal was 3 Å. As before, for all the runs described here the plane of observation was perpendicular to the laser axis and 1 cm from the target. The laser energy was 8 J in a 3.5-nsec FWHM pulse. The time t=0 corresponds to the time of the peak of the laser pulse. It is readily seen that the N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> 3914 Å line intensity rises rapidly from t=0 and then has an apparent second peak at about t=30 nsec. However, the NII 3995 Å line has negligible intensity until about t=23 nsec and then rises rapidly to a peak at about t=30 nsec. The CVI 3434 Å line has a similar rise time behavior to that of the NII 3995 Å line. From these results, we can conclude that the x rays and the UV emitted during the laser-target period can excite and ionize the molecular nitrogen, but do not have sufficient flux to dissociate and further ionize the

higher species of ionization. However, collisions between the target debris, whose time history is clearly indicated by the CVI 3434 Å signal, and the background plasma can easily excite the NII 3995 Å line.

Since we know the time of the peak of the CVI signal and the distance to the point of observation we can determine an average velocity, e.g.,  $3.3 \times 10^7$  cm/sec, for the conditions shown in Fig. 3. Also, the full-width-half-maximum of the CVI temporal signal of 10 nsec indicates that the debris shell has a thickness of about  $(3.3 \times 10^7 \text{ cm/sec}) \times (10 \times 10^{-9} \text{ sec}) = 0.33 \text{ cm}$ . This is consistent with the shell thickness inferred from dark-field shadowgrams. Another example of these velocity measurements is shown in Fig. 4, where the velocity was measured as a function of the laser energy for hydrogen gas at 15 mTorr pressure. Most of the data were taken with a magnetic field aligned perpendicular to the laser beam, but several of the shots had no magnetic field. The velocity rises quite rapidly with laser energy up to about 10 J on target and then continues to rise but at a much slower rate. There appears to be no dependence of the velocity on the magnetic field. The values of velocity measured using this technique agree favorably with the velocity measurements using time-of-flight charge collectors.

In Fig. 5, the peak intensity of the CVI 3434 Å line is plotted as a function of the incident laser energy. The background gas is hydrogen at a pressure of 15 mTorr. It is noted that the peak line intensity increases linearly with laser energy. However, if the CVI 3434 Å peak line intensity is plotted against pressure of hydrogen for a constant laser energy of 1.5 J as seen in Fig. 6, the line intensity was observed to have a strong minimum in the neighborhood of 5 mTorr pressure. This is may be associated with charge-exchange effects, but needs further work to explain it in detail. There is insufficient data at 15 mTorr to calculate temperatures and densities in the

photoionized and debris regions of the plasma.

VI. Data Taken at Pressures above 1 Torr (90% N<sub>2</sub> + 10% H<sub>2</sub>)

A. 1.5-Torr Case.

A time comparison of nitrogen molecular bands with nitrogen atomic and ionic lines at an ambient density of  $4.9 \times 10^{16}$  molecules/cm<sup>3</sup> ( $9.8 \times 10^{16}$  atoms/cm<sup>3</sup>) is shown in Fig. 7. As before, for all the runs described here the plane of observation was perpendicular to the laser axis and 1 cm from the target and t=0 corresponds to the time of the peak of the laser pulse. The laser energy was  $\sim 25$  J in a 4.5-ns FWHM pulse. The target is an aluminum foil about 2 mm wide and 4.6  $\mu$ m thick. The N<sub>2</sub> 3371 Å band and the N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> 3914 Å band have a very similar temporal behavior, i.e., both bands peak at about the same time during the laser pulse with no significant rise at the time the debris passes the point of observation. The NI 4256 Å line, on the other hand, shows a distinct peak during the time of the laser pulse and then a second even larger peak when the debris comes by. The NII 3995 Å only shows a small peak during the laser pulse and a much larger peak when the debris collides with the background plasma, and the NIII 4379 Å shows no intensity until the debris appears. Clearly, under these conditions photoionization alone cannot completely dissociate and ionize the atomic ions.

B. 5.0-Torr Case.

A similar time comparison of nitrogen molecular bands and atomic and ionic lines for an ambient gas pressure of 5 Torr is shown in Fig. 8. Other conditions are the same as those described in Fig. 7. Although the molecular

bands  $N_2$  3371 Å and  $N_2^+$  3914 Å have a similar sharp rise to that of the 1.5-Torr case, both have a second peak at the time the debris arrives at the point of observation. This second peak was found to be due to the continuum which has a strong peak at that time. The NI 4265 Å line has a very small peak at the time of the laser pulse but a very distinct peak at the time the debris front passes the observed region. Coupled with the distinct peak for the NII 3995 Å line at the time the debris front passes, it would appear that we have a sharp density step as expected from a "snow-plowing" blast wave. (The dark-field shadowgrams have also indicated a similar density step.) The NIII 4379 Å line also has a fairly sharp rise but it peaks about 15 nsec after the peaks of the NI and NII signals.

Also, in this sequence a continuum signal at 4834 Å was recorded. This signal has virtually no intensity during the laser pulse but has an appreciable amplitude when the debris front passes and then decays monotonically. The continuum intensity must be subtracted from the other intensities to get the true intensity of the spectral lines. But a useful benefit of the strong continuum is that we were able to use the absolute continuum intensity to determine the electron density.

In Fig. 9, we show several examples of an intensity step that occurred on the atom, ion and continuum signals just prior to the peak signal, which occurred at the time the blast-wave front passed. This "pre-step" did not occur on every shot, but for the 5 Torr case, it occurred on the majority of the shots. It is interesting to speculate on possible causes for this step. For example, the step could be due to an increase in plasma light emissivity caused by the ultraviolet radiation or fast electrons and ions that are emitted by the expanding shell; it could be caused by a step in density ahead of the debris (seen by J. Stamper in dark-field shadowgrams); or it could be

caused by the protuberances often seen in the blast wavefront under these conditions appearing in the field of view. This phenomena certainly bears further study.

## VII. Analysis of Data

In this section we will discuss the methods we used to calculate the temperatures and densities from the absolute, time-resolved intensity measurements. The equations will be solved by an iterative technique, since we do not have an independent measurement of either the electron density or the electron temperature.

The analysis of the plasma parameters in the photoionized region is based on the intensity from two nitrogen band heads. These are the (0,0) transition from the first negative band system of  $N_2^+$  at  $3914 \text{ \AA}$  and the (0,0) transition from the second positive band system of  $N_2$  at  $3371 \text{ \AA}$ . From the absolute and the relative intensities of these two bands one obtains the electron density and the electron temperature. The theoretical basis for this analysis and the details of calculations will be published.<sup>1</sup>

The analysis of the data in the debris-background plasma interaction region involved an estimate of the electron temperature, made from observations of the intensities of the lines from the various stages of ionization, and the electron density, made from the absolute measurement of the continuum intensity. The temperature is estimated from the appearance of the highest stage of ionization. Although we saw weak NIV 3479-3483  $\text{\AA}$  lines in our photographic spectra, Fig. 2, which was taken at a much lower background gas density and a much higher laser energy, we do not expect these lines to have appreciable intensity at 1.5-5 Torr and 25 J laser energy. We

assume that the NIII lines represent the highest stage of ionization present here. This technique of temperature measurement has a large error bracket, so we hope in our next measurements to use other techniques to obtain an electron temperature with a smaller error.

To obtain the electron density from the measurements of the absolute continuum intensities, we have used an equation obtained from Griem,<sup>2</sup> and have made the assumption that the electron density  $N_e$ , is approximately equal to the ion density,  $N_a^2$ . since the plasma is predominantly single-ionized. This equation, which includes both recombination radiation and bremsstrahlung contributions, is

$$I = \epsilon^{z,a} l \Delta\omega \quad [\text{ergs sec}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-2} \text{sr}^{-1}] \quad (1)$$

where  $\epsilon^{z,a}$  is the emission coefficient in units of energy per unit volume, time, solid angle and angular frequency interval. Since the emission coefficient is a rather long, involved equation (Eq. 5-36, p. 116 of Griem) it is best to get the description of the symbols from Griem.<sup>2</sup>

This equation for the continuum intensity is only weakly dependent on the temperature, so that the large error bracket for the temperature will not change the values for the electron density appreciably.

Two sets of data have been analyzed; one set at an ambient gas pressure of 1.5 Torr and one set at 5 Torr. The data was taken using an aluminum foil target, a background gas mixture of 90%  $N_2$  and 10%  $H_2$  and a laser energy of 25 J in a 5-nsec pulse. The plane of observation is 1 cm from the target and perpendicular to the laser beam. The optical pathlength,  $l$ , is calculated to be 1.5 cm for the photoionized region and is measured on shadowgrams to be approximately 0.5 cm at the blast-wave front. The results for the 1.5 Torr

measurements are given in Table 1, and the results for the 5.0 Torr measurements are given in Table 2.

Table 1. Table of the measured temperature and densities in the photoionized region and the debris front at an ambient pressure of 1.5 Torr ( $4.9 \times 10^{16}$  molecules/cm<sup>3</sup>).

	Photoionized Region	Pre-Step (Ahead of Blast Wave)	Blast-Wave Front
Te	2.5 eV	-	< 14 eV
Ne	$3 \times 10^{14}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>	$5 \times 10^{17}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>	$9 \times 10^{17}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>
Deg. of Ion	0.3%	~ 100%	~ 100%
Density step	-	-	10

Assuming  $Ne \approx N^+$

Table 2. Table of the measured temperature and densities in the photoionized region and the debris front at an ambient pressure of 5 Torr ( $1.6 \times 10^{17}$  molecules/cm<sup>3</sup>).

	Photoionized Region	Pre-Step (Ahead of Blast Wave)	Blast-Wave Front
Te	1.85 eV	-	< 14 eV
Ne	$6 \times 10^{14}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>	$2 \times 10^{18}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>	$5 \times 10^{18}$ cm <sup>-3</sup>
Deg. of Ion	0.2%	~ 100%	~ 100%
Density Step	-	-	15

Assuming  $Ne \approx N^+$

In addition to the spectroscopic measurement of the electron density at the debris front at 5 Torr ambient pressure, an estimate of the minimum jump in  $N_e$  can be obtained from analysis of the dark field shadowgrams. Such an estimate gave  $N_e > 1 \times 10^{17}$  cm<sup>-3</sup>. Although this is over an order-of-magnitude

lower than the spectroscopic measurement of  $N_e$ , it is a minimum value. The spectroscopic measurement of  $N_e$  is felt to be the more accurate measurement of electron density.

Since the density of the ions in the blast-wave front for the 5 Torr case is about  $5 \times 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , which is about 15 times the ambient density of the nitrogen atoms, it is necessary to have a snow plowing of ions into a shell of similar ion density. This is consistent with the dark field shadowgrams which show a definite shell structure, and also with the analysis of the velocity of the shell as that due to a blast wave. For the 1.5 Torr case, the density of the ions is about  $9 \times 10^{17} \text{ cm}^{-3}$  in the blast-wave front, which is about 10 times the background atom density. (This latter density step is about the same as that calculated using a blast-wave model.<sup>3,4</sup>

#### VIII. Summary

The spectroscopic data presented in this report is our first attempt to measure absolute intensities of spectral lines and continuum in this experiment and then carry out the analysis of the data. In the process, we have established approximate values for the plasma temperature and densities. More accurate values will be obtained during our next experimental series.

The time-resolved spectral data allows the separation of the photoionized region from the region excited and ionized by the debris. In the 1.5-5 Torr pressure range, a density step was seen ahead of the main peak in the signal. The interpretation of this density step has not been established at this time and warrants further study.

## IX. Acknowledgments

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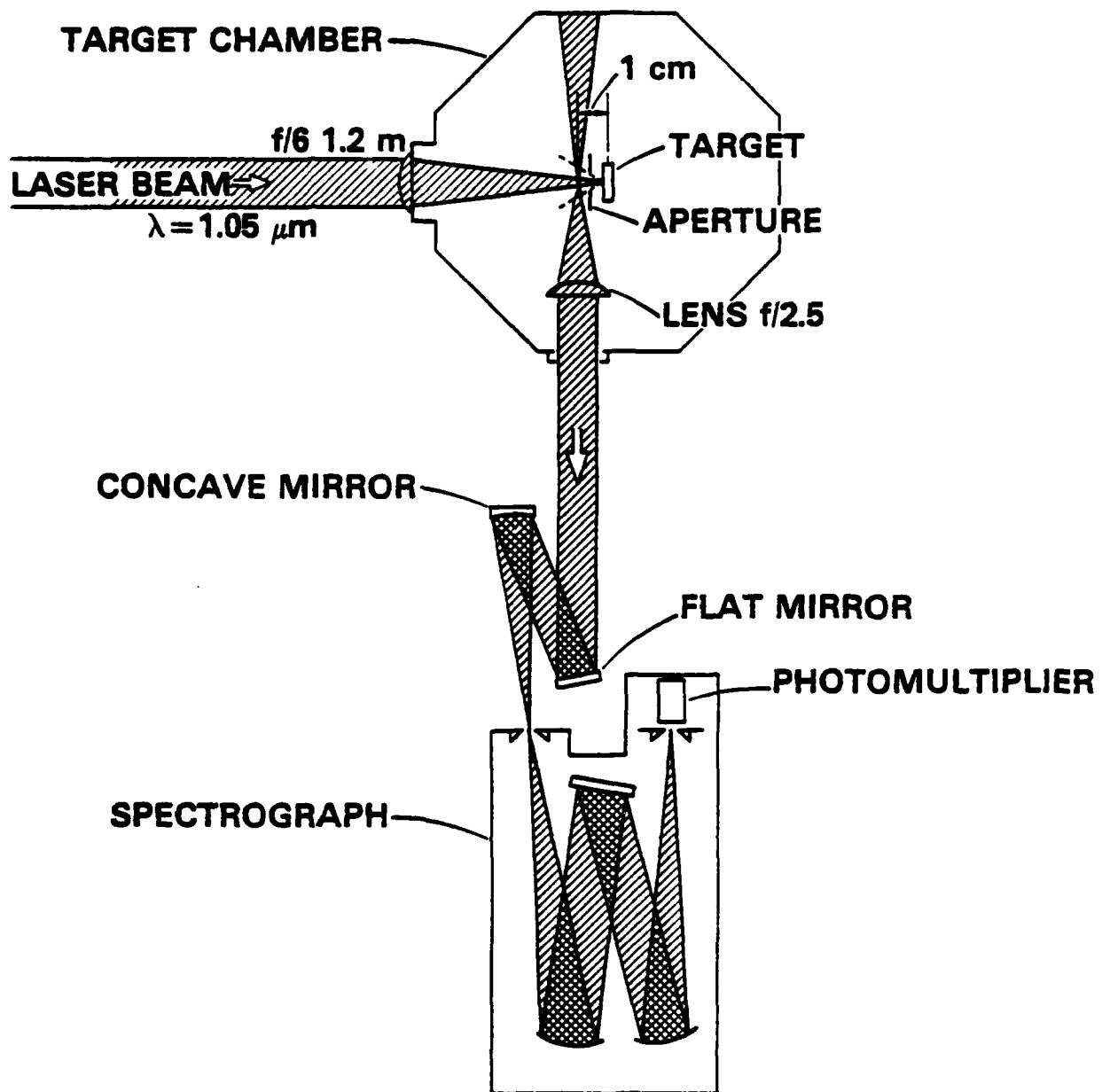


Figure 1  
Experimental arrangement.

SHOT 12455  
 120 J, 4.5 nsec pulse  
 Al(4.5 micron) target; Nitrogen ambient gas(165 mTorr)  
 SPECTROGRAPH VIEWS 1-cm FROM TARGET SURFACE.

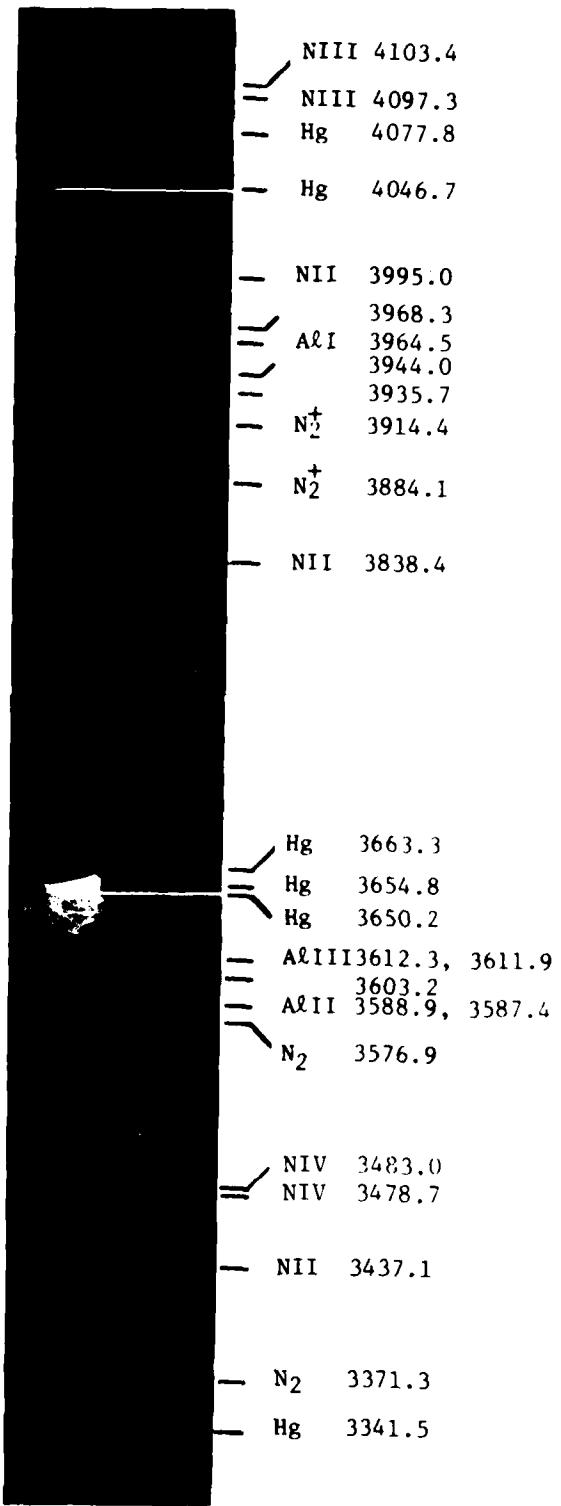
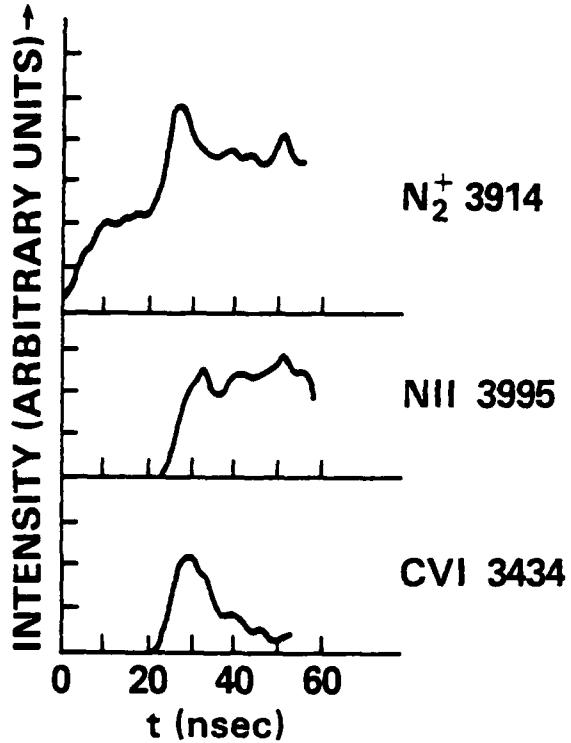


Figure 2

Typical photographic spectrum for conditions shown on figure. The mercury (Hg) lines are superimposed on the spectrum prior to the shot to give a wavelength calibration. The spectral line identifications are given next to the lines.



**CONDITIONS:**

15 m Torr N<sub>2</sub>  
 1.5 mg/cm<sup>2</sup> C TARGET  
 8 J/3.5 nsec  
 $\Delta\lambda = 3 \text{ \AA}$   
 1 cm FROM TARGET

Figure 3

A temporal comparison of the spectral line intensities for the background gas pressure of 15 mTorr. (Other conditions are given on the figure.) The  $t=0$  time is the time of the peak of the laser pulse. The ordinate scale is in arbitrary units and the zero intensity level is the value before  $t=0$  time.

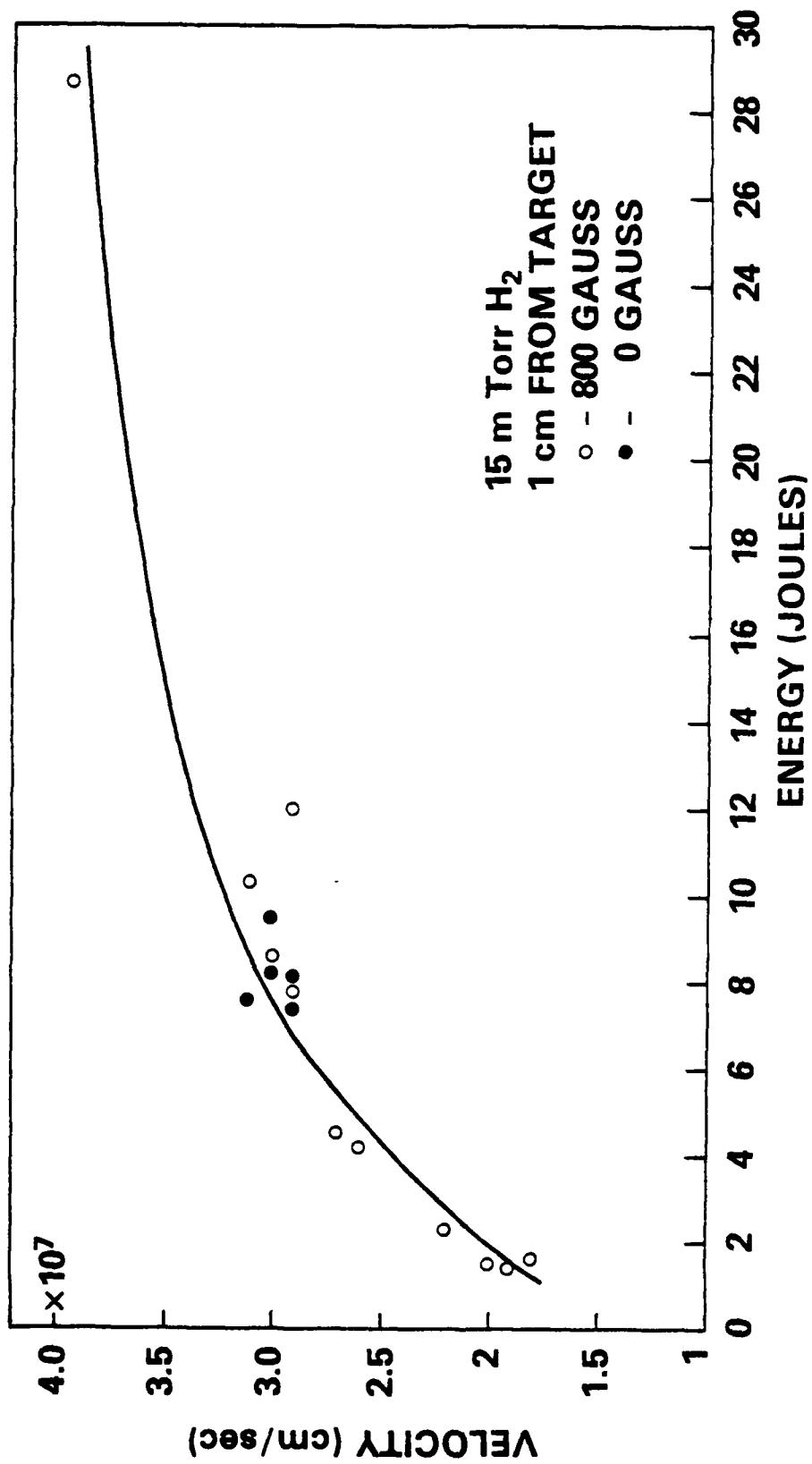


Figure 4

Average velocity of the debris front from the time-of-flight of the C<sub>54</sub><sup>+</sup> (CV1) ions versus laser energy. Presence of the magnetic field did not modify velocity of C<sub>54</sub><sup>+</sup> ions.

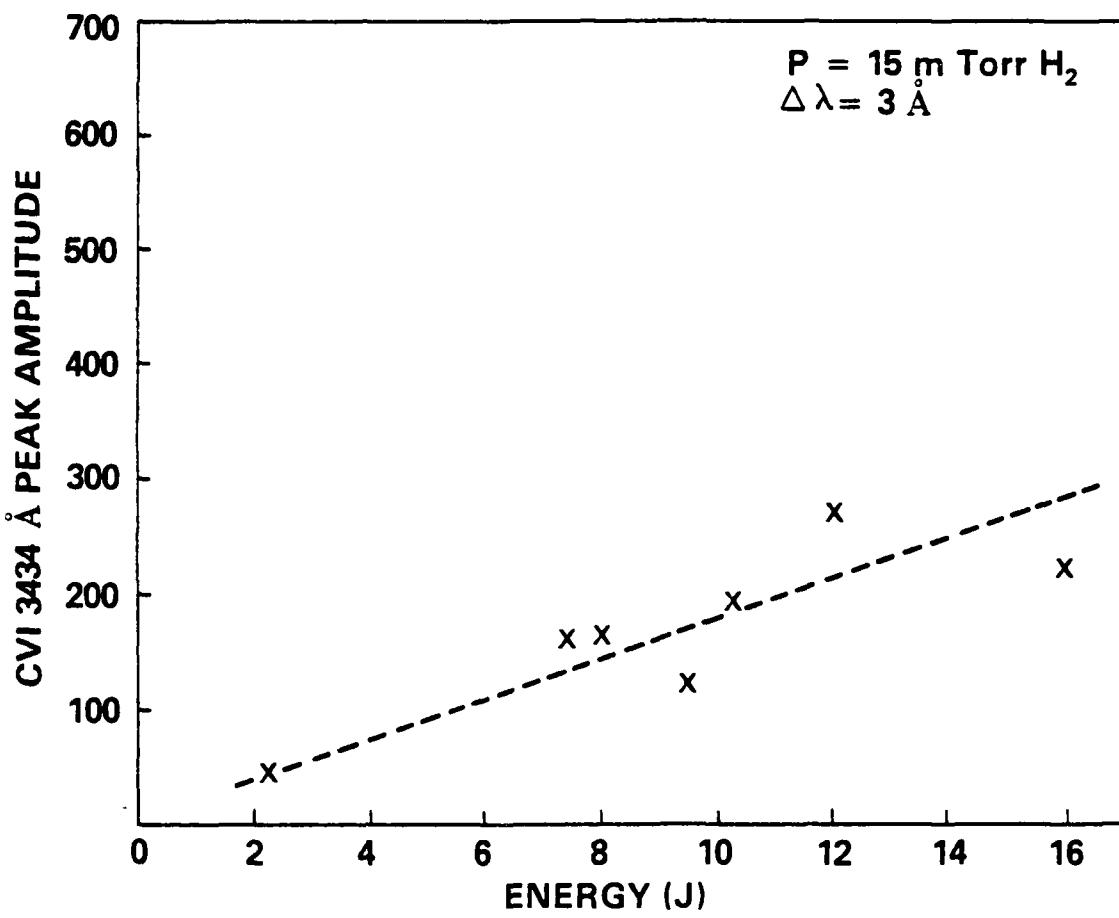


Figure 5

Peak CVI 3434 Å line intensity versus laser energy at constant pressure (15 mTorr H<sub>2</sub>).

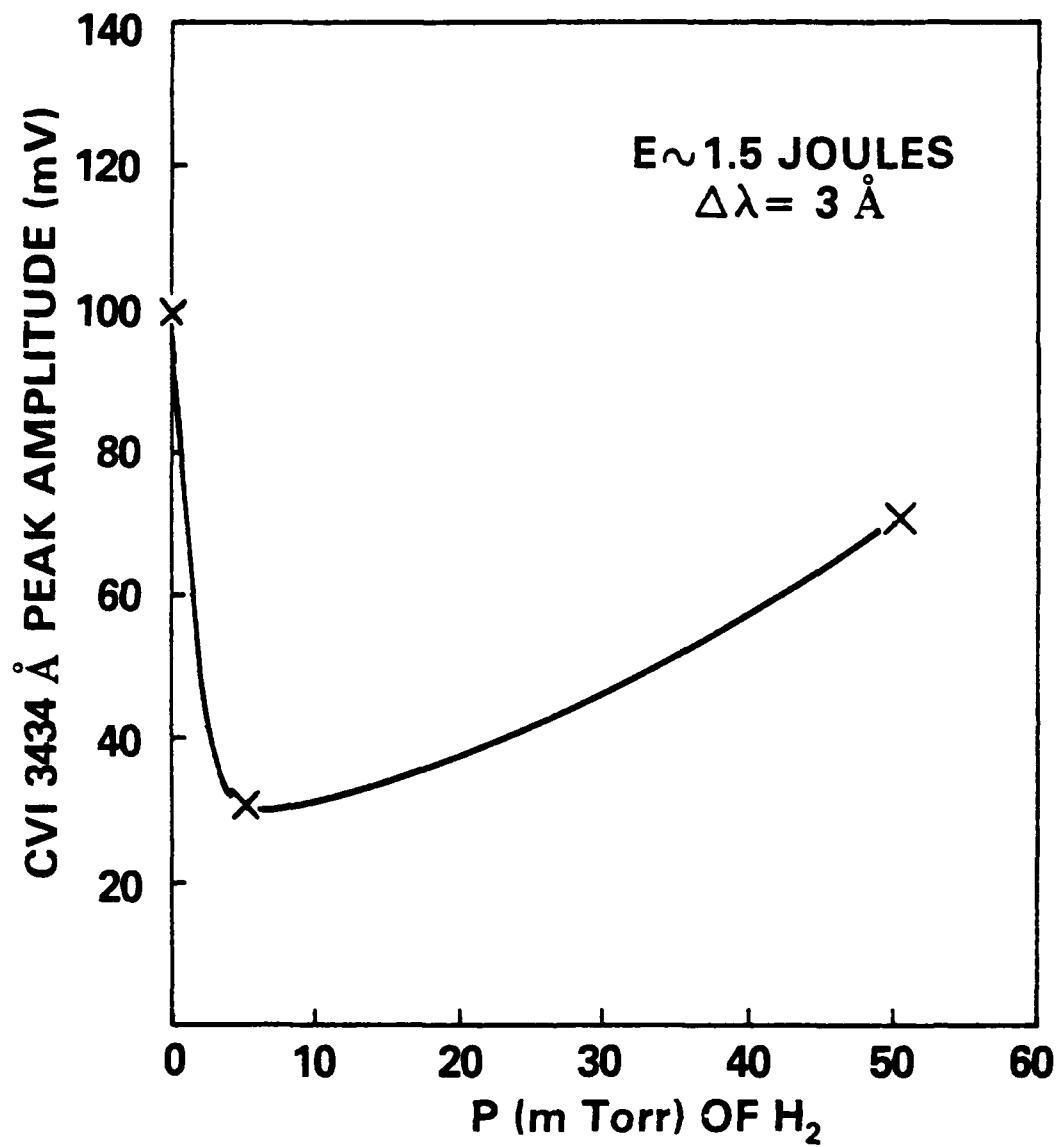
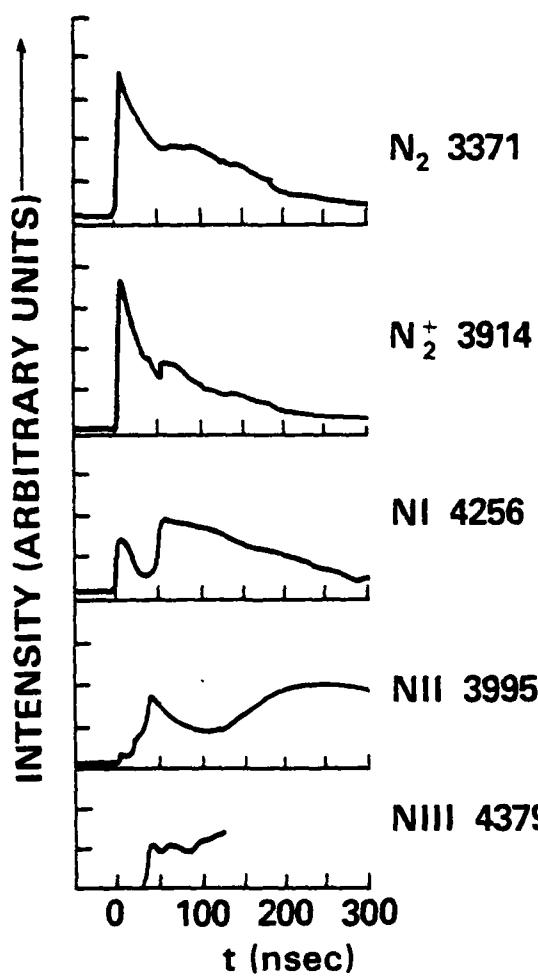


Figure 6

Peak CVI 3434 Å line intensity versus background gas pressure at constant laser energy (1.5 Joules).



CONDITIONS:

1.5 Torr (90% N<sub>2</sub> + 10% Hz)  
 4.6  $\mu$ m Al FOIL  
 25 J/5 nsec  
 $\Delta\lambda = 3 \text{ \AA}$   
 1 cm FROM TARGET

Figure 7

A temporal comparison of the spectral line intensities for the background gas pressure of 1.5 Torr. (Other conditions are given on the figure.) The t=0 time is the time of the peak of the laser pulse. The line intensity is zero before t=0 time.

CONDITIONS:

5 Torr (90% N<sub>2</sub> + 10% H<sub>2</sub>)

4.6  $\mu$ m Al FOIL

25 J/5 nsec,

$\Delta\lambda = 3 \text{ \AA}$

1 cm FROM TARGET

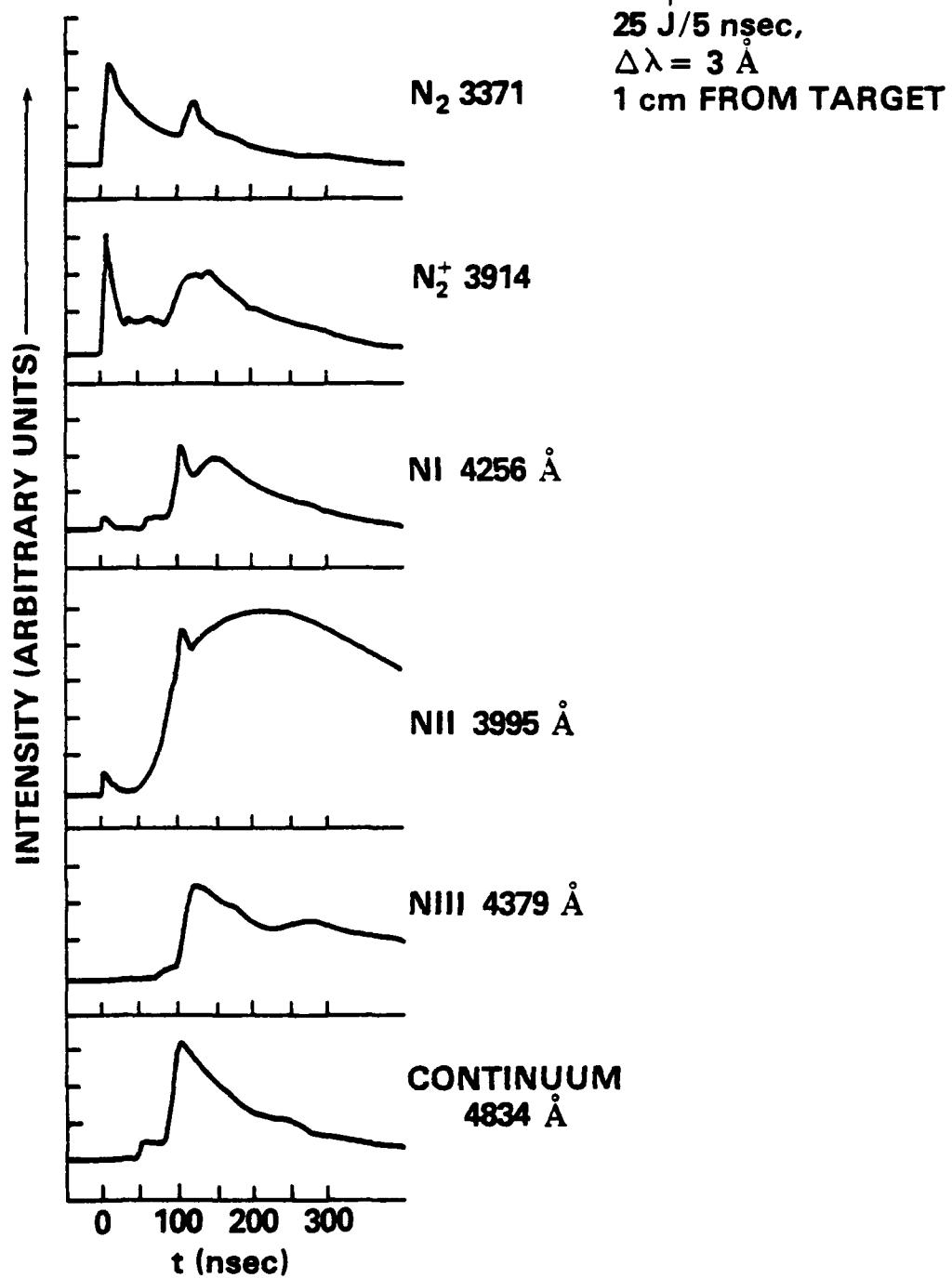


Figure 8

A temporal comparison of the spectral line and continuum intensities for a background gas pressure of 5.0 Torr. Other conditions are given on figure. The t=0 time is the time of the laser peak.

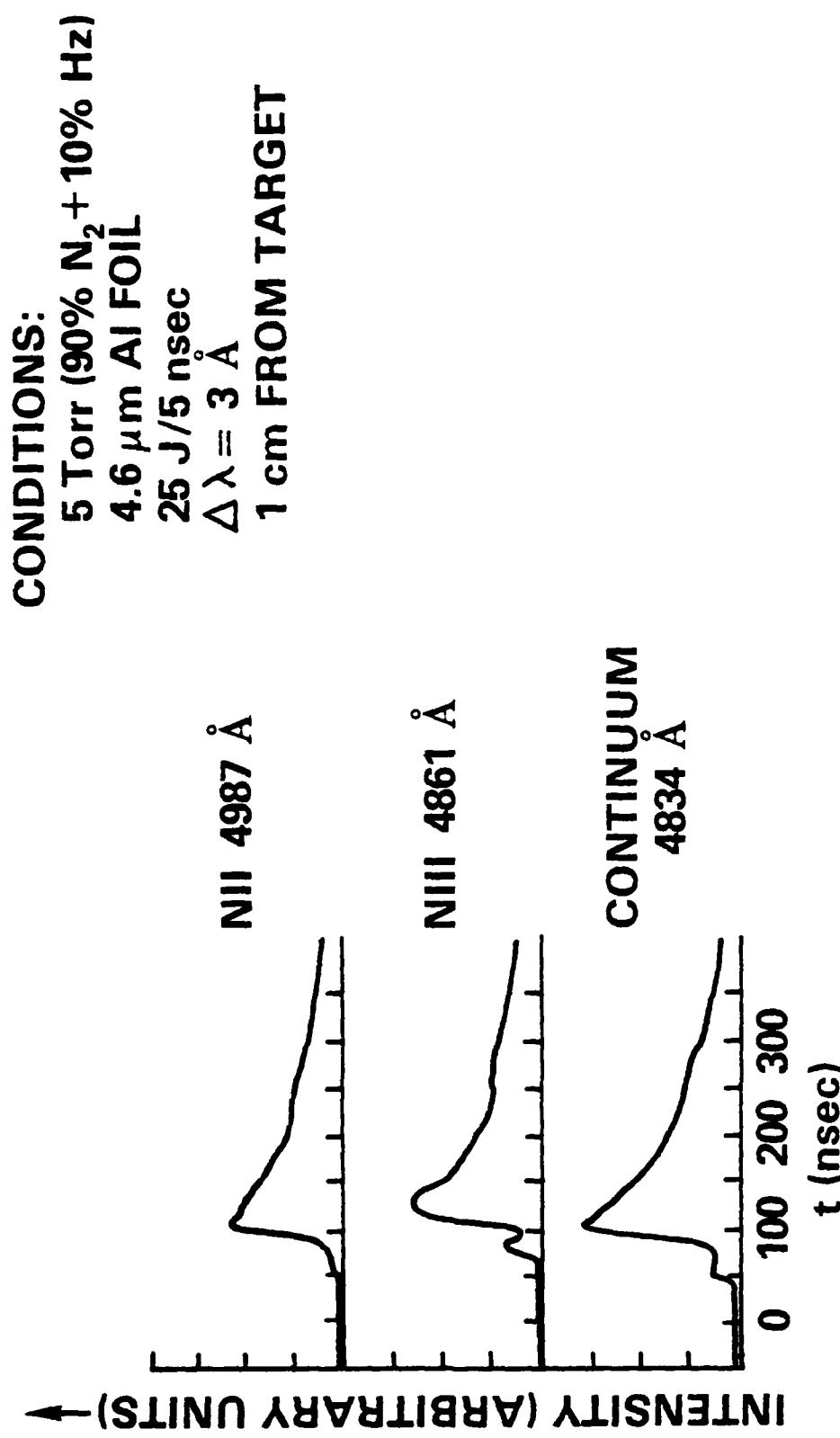


Figure 9

Sample intensity-time traces showing a pre-step ahead of the debris for the case of a background pressure of 5 Torr. Conditions are shown on figure.

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